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STATE FOR EUR/FO AND EUR/SE

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SUBJECT: DAS BRYZA PRESSES TURKISH MFA FOR CLOSE  
CONSULTATION ON SHARED PRIORITIES

REF: ANKARA 4486

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney; reasons: E.O. 12958, 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: During a series of introductory meetings and a lunch with Turkish MFA officials on August 1, EUR DAS Matt Bryza welcomed the recent positive turn in bilateral relations and pressed for a structured approach to rebuilding US-Turkey partnership through agreement on a shared strategic vision and implementation of that vision through a regular series of meetings and exchanges. He praised Turkey's second command of ISAF in Afghanistan and called for expanded cooperation there; noted our increasingly concurrent vision for Iraq's future; underscored the need for Turkey to join the international community in isolating Syria and to press Iran to live up to its nuclear commitments and urged Turkey to actively support the democratic process in the Caucasus and Central Asia. There was complete agreement on the Turkish side for the need to develop mechanisms for closer coordination. Undersecretary Ali Tuygan and Director General for Bilateral Relations Selahattin Alpar characterized Turkey's relationship with Syria and Iran as necessary for Turkey keep a pulse on the Middle East and warned against the dangers of isolation. There was general agreement on both sides that we share the same goals in Iraq, Syria and Iran but disagree on some of the tactics. END SUMMARY.

#### A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR JOINT ACTION

12. (U) In meetings with Undersecretary Ali Tuygan, Deputy Undersecretary (U/S) for Bilateral Affairs Ertugrul Apakan, Deputy U/S for Multilateral and International Security Affairs Nabi Sensoy, Director General (DG) for Bilateral Affairs Selahattin Alpar and at a lunch hosted by Deputy U/S Apakan and Deputy Directors General (DDG) for Iraq, the Middle East and the Caucasus, Bryza recognized the positive turn in bilateral relations in recent months, highlighting the utility of the early June visit of Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul to Washington. He outlined the need to articulate a shared strategic vision of common interests and shared values, which could occur at the Under Secretary level, and regular meetings at lower levels to implement our strategy and achieve specific goals on: Iraq; the Broader Middle East and Central Asia; the Caucasus and Black Sea; Turkey's EU accession and Cyprus; economics, trade, and energy; and Afghanistan.

13. (U) Across the board, MFA officials voiced their support for this concept. U/S Tuygan stressed there is "no strategic division between the US and Turkey," and suggested putting a framework on paper -- not a formal document to be signed -- but rather as a guide to organize consultations. Deputy U/S Sensoy said both Turkey and the US should emphasize the generally positive aspects of the relationship, not the few areas where "we don't see eye to eye." Sensoy said that communicating on a regular basis would not be enough. It was important to take each others comments into consideration for action. Deputy U/S Apakan said Turkey looks to the US to broaden the relationship with respect to technology transfer -- where the US government should lead the private sector forward -- and university and civil society exchanges. Apakan was pleased to hear that the US is moving to make US funding for the Turkey Fulbright Program the largest in the world. DG Alpar suggested that PM Erdogan and FM Gul could initiate the broad process of energizing US-Turkish relations through meetings with US officials on the margins of UNGA. Both Sensoy and Apakan dismissed the existence of anti-Americanism or anti-Semitism in Turkey, with Sensoy suggesting that continued American harping on these issues could serve to create them.

#### CONVERGING VIEWS ON IRAQ

14. (C) During a luncheon discussion on Iraq, DDG for the Middle East Safak Gokturk noted his pleasure that the US and Turkey not only shared the same goals in Iraq, but increasingly agreed on the steps required to achieve them. He said the Iraqi constitution must focus on the Iraq of the future, not today, which, in his view would look more like the US than Europe. The primary question, he asked, is whether it will be possible to commit Sunnis to the democratic process within the US election timetable. He

urged close cooperation on security issues, and on ensuring the constitution is adopted by a clear majority to demonstrate a broad Iraqi belief that there was no turning back. In response to Bryza's question on how to achieve this goal, Gokturk said Turkey, the US and Iraq could cooperate through efforts such as Turkey's project to bring Shia Turkmen and Sunni Turkmen leaders of Tal Afar together to calm tensions and stem the movement of insurgents toward Baghdad. (Comment: To the best of our knowledge, despite its efforts, Ankara was never able to bring the leaders of these two communities to Turkey. End Comment.) Gokturk welcomed the appointment of Ambassador Khalilzad, who "knows Turkey well" and whom he believes will strengthen our joint efforts in Iraq. He urged cooperation to engage Sunnis and warned that if they were not given a strong role in re-shaping the country, Iraq could break apart. He added that because they provide the link between the Kurds and the Shias, Sunnis must participate at a level higher than their demographic representation.

15. (C) To increase bilateral cooperation on Iraq, Deputy DG Alpar suggested meetings between Turkey's Special Representative for Iraq Osman Koruturk, and Deputy Undersecretary Ahmet Uzumcu and their US counterparts every three months to discuss mechanisms to achieve the goals outlined by Gokturk. He noted, however, that Koruturk was likely to be appointed ambassador to a Western European country soon and his deputy, Ethem Tokdemir, would head to Asia, perhaps to Afghanistan and said the exchanges should be continued with their successors. In response to Charge's point that international support of Iraq's economic development was critical, and that efforts like the Turkish Business Conference for Iraq were valuable, Alpar complained that Turkey's current trade with Iraq still lagged considerably behind its level before the first Gulf War. Deputy U/S Apakan urged consideration of the work in Iraq as nation-restoring, not nation-building. All Iraqi ethnic groups felt an Iraqi identity that was stronger than their Sunni, Shia or other ethnic or religious identity.

PKK - US TIMETABLE FOR ACTION TOO LATE?

16. (C) Turning to the PKK, Gokturk suggested a disconnect between the increased PKK activity currently taking place in Turkey and the US time frame for completion of the Iraqi political process and possible action against the PKK. He urged consideration of actions that could be taken in the interim period. In a separate meeting, Alpar said the US needed to understand Turkish sensitivities on the PKK and lamented the recent press photo showing a PKK flag flying over a building in Kirkuk and suggested that this demonstrated US tolerance for the terrorist organization. Bryza reiterated US opposition to the PKK and said he would look into the flag issue. (Note: Turkish press reported on Aug. 1 that the Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party (KDSP), a PKK Front Organization, opened an office in Kirkuk. Post is working to confirm whether this is a new or pre-existing office. End note.) Bryza countered that the US and Turkey needed to consider a broad approach against the PKK that focused not only on Iraq, but on Europe and Turkey as well. He hoped the GOT recognized that a full-scale US military assault against the PKK was not the answer to resolving the PKK problem; Turkish interlocutors agreed.

17. (C) Deputy U/S Sensoy told Bryza during an office call that Turkey expected US assistance to close down PKK front operations in Iraq, including the KDSP, the Iraq Democratic Restructuring Party, the Mesopotamian News Agency and the Voice of Kurdish Youth. Bryza responded that while the US shares Turkey's concerns regarding the PKK presence in Iraq, the US and Turkey would have to work with the sovereign government of Iraq (including the KRG) to address this problem. At lunch, Bryza stated the US had launched a process to break down the PKK terrorist problem into discreet and digestible components in Europe, Turkey and Iraq. In Iraq, all such efforts must proceed from the premise of strengthening the country's territorial integrity, and recognizing the sovereignty of the Iraqi government. Trilateral channels provided perhaps the best hope for working through these tough issues.

US SHOULD DO MORE TO SUPPORT NORTHERN CYPRUS

18. (C) Deputy U/S Apakan, during an office call, emphasized to Bryza that Turkey had exerted substantial efforts to press for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue, and urged the US to do more to break the isolation of northern Cyprus. He said that "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) President" Talat, in Ankara that day, was trying to make peace; the US should support him, i.e., by receiving him in Washington. Above all, he said, the US should not let the Greek Cypriots off the hook, and should avoid taking at face value any Greek Cypriot proposals to adjust the Annan Plan. Referring to a July 29 declaration that Turkey's decision that same day to extend its EU Customs Agreement to the 10 newest members was not recognition of the Republic of Cyprus

(reftel), Apakan claimed Turkey was obliged to issue the declaration but, in doing so, had tried to be as non-confrontational as possible. He expressed hope that the EU would not respond harshly. On relations with Greece, Apakan said Turkey is hopeful that its offers of confidence building measures, "good chemistry" between PMs Erdogan and Karamanlis, excellent relations between municipalities and between Greek Islands and Turkey's Aegean provinces, as well as booming two-way trade and financial relations, will positively impact the broader relationship.

#### KEEPING AN EYE ON SYRIA AND IRAN

19. (C) U/S Tuygan defended Turkey's relations with Syria, saying the government had not treated Assad as special but that his "charming wife" has the Turkish media on her side and she is "good public diplomacy." Offering Saddam Hussein as a model, he warned that isolation can "impact the mentality of a leader." Due to his isolation, Saddam did not have anyone to contradict him and keep him in line. Tuygan stressed that Turkey could and would reinforce the goals of the international community in its dealings with Damascus. Bryza recognized Turkey's sovereign right to conduct diplomatic relations with its neighbor, but suggested that Ankara avoid grand symbolic gestures that would undermine the international consensus to isolate Assad. During lunch, DDG for Iran and South Asia, Aydin Evirgen said the US and Turkey agree on the goal with Iran but have different view on how to get there. He acknowledged that Ahmadinejad's election as President was a surprise to Turkey and that "no one knows well what he will do." Now that the conservatives dominate the Iranian political spectrum, Evirgen said he expected them to behave more rigidly, but urged against outside efforts to foster internal turmoil. In his view, he said, it is clear that the desire for reform is deeply rooted in society. If outsiders push too hard, they could create problems.

10. (C) Evirgen predicted that the Iranian government would "play with the economy" and will resist efforts to stop Iran's uranium enrichment program. According to Evirgen, the gulf countries are increasingly concerned and Turkey is advising the Iranians to be completely transparent and fully cooperative, and not to produce nuclear weapons. He reiterated Turkey's support for the EU-3 negotiation process. DG Alpar, who recently served as Turkey's Ambassador to Iran, said Iran was famous for taking steps backwards. Iran's goal is to be a regional power and it wants the capability to produce bombs to confirm its equality on the world stage with Israel, India and Pakistan. Evirgen added that it is important for the international community to keep up the pressure, but to do so without cornering Iran because "they don't like to be trapped."

#### PLEADING THE CASE ON ARMENIA

11. (C) Deputy U/S Sensoy spent considerable time during Bryza's office call pleading Turkey's case on Armenia. He acknowledged that the events of 1915 were a tragedy, but was quick to note that people on both sides of the conflict died. Sensoy emphasized that one must take the historical circumstances surrounding those events into consideration in an effort to explain, but not to justify, what happened. He also said that the term genocide should only be applied in the context of the definition provided by the 1948 international convention on genocide. Sensoy requested that two Armenian resolutions before the U.S. Congress (HR 185 and HR 313) be killed in committee. He criticized the comments of an American Congressman who supports an Armenian genocide resolution. Bryza suggested that Turkey could go a long way towards quieting the debate over the Armenian "genocide" by recognizing and expressing sorrow for Ottoman Turkey's responsibility for the human tragedy of 1915.

12. (C) According to Sensoy, Turkey supports a bilateral discussion between Turkey and Armenia on the events of 1915. The GOT would welcome third party participation in such discussions, but Turkey wants a bilateral dialogue and not an international conference. Sensoy said that Turkey is willing to discuss the recognition of Armenia and the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border, but it does not want the bilateral discussions to start with these two issues. Bryza noted that the White House and State Department are carefully watching developments in Congress regarding the Armenian resolutions and noted that public statements like the GOT's recent letter calling for Turkish-Armenian dialogue helps the administration keep these resolutions in committee.

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13. (C) Sensoy claimed that the recent postponement of an academic conference in Istanbul to discuss the Armenian issue was not caused by the Turkish government. He lamented the "unfortunate comments" made at "a senior level," but claimed that the government had no legal grounds to close the meeting. (Comments: Justice Minister Cicek -- who is also the official spokesman for the AKP government -- publicly

accused those who organized the conference of "treason." End Comment.) Charge and Bryza suggested that the GOT should give repeated, public assurances to the conference organizers that their actions are not illegal or treasonous.

14. (C) Separately at lunch, DDG for the Caucasus and Central Asia Huseyin Avni Karslioglu said Turkey is encouraging the Armenians to make a "real move" to open diplomatic relations.

He added that, despite differences between the two governments, informal and trade relations are very good. Bryza noted that for the past 18 months the US had been working on a framework for advancing towards a settlement of the Nargorno-Karabakh conflict that could facilitate Turkey's normalizing relations with Armenia. The framework could involve Armenian withdrawal from the Azerbaijani territories it occupies in exchange for eventual consideration of Karabakh's status. In any case, the US encouraged Turkey to normalize relations with Armenia as soon as possible.

#### TURKEY COMMITTED TO AFGHANISTAN

15. (C) At lunch, Evirgen raised Turkey's happiness with the progress in Afghanistan but noted that the upcoming parliamentary elections will be important to establish a permanent governmental structure. He urged consideration of a post-Bonn process. He noted Tajik and other ethnic group concerns about the potential return of the Taliban, but dismissed the Taliban's capabilities to launch catastrophic attacks as minimal. He noted Turkey's completion of its ISAF VII command and said the government was negotiating with France for joint leadership of the Central Region command. Turkey is not considering a PRT at this time but may do so down the road. Evirgen emphasized the need for Afghanistan to have a strong national army and pledged Turkey's continued contributions to military training.

16. (C) Calling narcotics one of the most challenging issues for the country, Evirgen called for a long-term comprehensive strategy that includes alternative livelihoods. He said Turkey had recently decided to become more active in this area and had identified new funds to initiate narcotics police training and farming programs and welcomed partnership with the US. Evirgen said PM Erdogan had been impressed with the level of reconstruction needed during his May visit to Afghanistan and returned home enthusiastic about increasing Turkey's contribution to that effort. DG Alpar added that Turkish and US companies were working well together in Afghanistan, including on USAID supported projects. Bryza welcomed this news, and noted that the US and Turkey have worked increasingly well together over the past year. In order to avoid past misunderstandings over Turkey's intentions with respect to its relations with General Dostum and PRTs and other assistance, Bryza urged close contacts and consultations both in Washington and in Ankara.

#### FOSTERING DEMOCRACY IN THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

17. (C) Asked by Apakan at lunch to review Turkish policy in the Caucasus, Karslioglu criticized Georgian President Saakashvili and portrayed Russian policy toward Georgia as logical and understandable. In his view, Saakashvili had been wrong to strip Ajara of its autonomy as it led South Ossetia and Abkhazia to close up. "At the same time he extends his hand to them, he assembles his army." When he was "slapped" by Russia after he pressed his luck in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, he "went crying" to the U.S. and other "big powers". In short, Karslioglu asserted, Saakashvili is no more than a hyperactive child, but his actions are disturbing various ethnic communities in Georgia. Given its active and influential Abkhaz population, Turkey could play a good offices role in Abkhazia, but Saakashvili has rejected Turkish overtures. Indeed, the Georgians' seizure of a Turkish ship which was sailing between Trabzon and Sukhumi just after Turkey made such an overture is an example of Saakashvili's irresponsibility. Moreover, Saakashvili's rumored efforts to acquire military hardware wherever he can find it is not good for the Georgian economy or for the mood in Georgia's various ethnic communities, Karslioglu concluded.

18. (C) Bryza responded that the US considers Saakashvili a more careful tactician than others might think, and does not agree that he has eliminated Azara's autonomy. He added that the Ajaran "government" under Aslan Abashidze was essentially a criminal enterprise, and that the US welcomed the flow of Azaran revenue back to Tbilisi. On South Ossetia, Bryza said the US supports an international negotiating process and has urged Georgia to flesh out its peace program and convey it to its neighbors and the OSCE, then get their buy-in to approach Russia. The US also regularly reminds Tbilisi any unilateral use of force will be disastrous, and lead to a devastating response by Russia. Bryza urged Turkey to formalize its trade links with Georgia and called on Washington and Ankara to build on their existing mil-mil cooperation to support the development of democratic processes. Karslioglu stated that Turkey is sending the same message on reconciliation to Georgia and elsewhere in the region. In Azerbaijan,

Karslioglu said the Turkish government has strongly urged President Aliyev to hold democratic elections and is considering sending up to "several hundred" observers through the OSCE. Concerned with developments in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Turkey is urging those governments to move the democratic process forward.

**19. (U) Meeting Participants:**

In addition to separate office calls with Undersecretary Ali Tuygan, Deputy Undersecretary for Bilateral Affairs Ertugrul Apakan, Deputy Undersecretary for Multilateral and International Security Affairs Nabi Sensoy and Director General for Bilateral Affairs Selahattin Alpar, DAS Bryza had lunch with the following MFA officials:

- Deputy Undersecretary Apakan
- Director General Alpar
- Assistant to the Special Representative for Iraq Ethem Tokdemir
- Deputy Director General for Iran and South Asia Aydin Evirgen
- Deputy Director General for the Caucasus and Central Asia Huseyin Avni Karslioglu
- Head of Department for North America Meral Barlas
- Second Secretary in the Department for North American Lale Agusman

**20. (U) DAS Bryza cleared this message.  
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